

2024 MARKET HOUSE VISITORS REPORT

For the 2024 season just 8 volunteer stewards opened the Market House to visitors on Saturdays, 1.30pm – 4pm from 30th March (Easter Saturday) through and including Saturday 28th September, a total of 35 days.

There was a total of 482 visitors on the ‘regular’ 34 Saturdays, an average of 14 per day, and a staggering 210 visitors on Newent Fun Day. The average number of visitors compares very favourably with 2022 (8.4) and 2023 (11). Though we did have visitors from beyond Newent, we think the large attendance on the Newent Fun Day reflects both the event and the expanded population. We also know that the banner advertising the Market House opening season, funded by the Town Council, did bring in new people – they told us so!

Attendance is also helped by our participation in the National Trust-inspired Heritage Open Days. For the first time this year the Forest of Dean promoted the event as well as Gloucester, and we were mentioned in both programmes. My thanks to the Town Council for their support and to stewards who gave extra mid-week and Sunday cover,

All the stewards are to be heartily thanked for readily signing up and then getting on with their volunteering without having to be prompted. Recruiting new volunteers is a challenge and the whole Market House visiting experience is in a precarious position should we lose any of the current eight.

Thanks, again, to Nisa for allowing us to store the A-frame “Market House Open” boards in their storage area, and to Seymour’s newsagent for keeping the Market House keys safe. As chairman of the stewards, I would also like to thank the Town Council and staff for their help and support.

Though visiting the Market House is free, we do have a beautifully hand-made collecting box for donations towards upkeep. This year £55.75 was donated, considerably more than usual, and undoubtedly a reflection of the increased footfall.

As ever the Visitors Book was signed by people from across the country and the globe: West Yorkshire, Wiltshire, Monmouth, Reading as well as Tenerife and Australia. Their comments are always gratifying:

- Awesome place – so much info!
- Fascinating. Some wonderful historical insights.
- Great building kept up very well!

In 2025 we will continue to try to recruit more stewards and to publicise the Market House opening in all the usual media.

Ginny James
November 2024